

the details of the election to a range of germane academic theories, this book constitutes a valuable source of understanding beyond the election itself.

Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence

Yves Winter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 238.

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In *Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence*, Yves Winter offers us a comprehensive treatment of political violence, in all of its various incarnations, manifestations and “orders,” which, on its surface, is a curious project given Machiavelli’s patent lack of interest in systematizing such a project himself. That said, Winter has done a significant service for the historian of political ideas. This is a clear-eyed and accessibly written compendium of the distinct role that Machiavellian violence plays in a variety of contexts, from popular uprisings to authoritarian rule.

Winter understands violence as the lever that gives analytical purchase to Machiavelli’s most valuable insights. The book’s real strength lies in its ability to cut through the voluminous and contradictory literature on the subject and offer an unerringly fair and balanced assessment of what Machiavelli’s intentions were at the time of writing. Winter shows how each of Machiavelli’s texts are uniquely revelatory of the various conditions of princely violence, necessary oligarchic or republican violence and the governing vicissitudes of plebeian uprisings. Read cumulatively, these texts can offer us an understanding of Machiavelli’s intentions and preoccupations, which can appear philosophically coherent—although they remain the contextually dependent insights of a political actor rather than a political philosopher. Winter understands this limitation and avoids the systematizer’s most egregious error of imposing a coherence that an author could never have intended. However, in attempting to confront all possible manifestations of the subject, even this relatively slim volume does not avoid the occasional lapse into the absurd. These include the attempt at a gendered argument concerning foundational violence (137) and a discussion of the contribution of Berns and Derrida to the unusually vague treatment of foundational beginnings (120), which are the weakest elements in the book. Such moments are always attended by a lapse in rhetorical clarity that match the lapse in analytical rigour and are mercifully rare and inconsequential to the value of the work as a whole.

It is in his exposition of the Ciompi rebellion (170–75) that Winter’s approach offers the freshest insights. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli claims to offer the “effectual truth” (*verità effettuale*) of things. In *Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence*, Winter offers the reader Machiavelli’s “effectual truth” of how violence changes with the social and political standing of those who wield it. By tracing Machiavelli’s line throughout all his works, Winter offers us previously hidden insights. For example, he shows how Machiavelli challenges any claim that the poor should embody a romantic ideal of restraint or civic high-mindedness and instead need to employ theatrical acts of cruelty in order to break the bonds of historical servitude (183). Rather than being the preserve of the powerful and wealthy, cruelty is an essential weapon of the poor and politically dispossessed (181). As Machiavelli says in the *Discourses*: “The cruelties of the multitude are against whoever they fear will seize the common good; those of a prince are against whoever he fears will seize his own good.” Perhaps it is a consequence of our own new political reality that that passage, along with the insight that populist “tumults and violence are driven . . . by a mixture of political grievances and desires for revenge” (183),

seems more relevant to 2021 than 1378. The fact that “Machiavelli puts forward an unapologetically partisan and antagonistic model of plebeian politics in which uprisings, secessions and spectacular violence play a major role” (189) is as uncomfortable to a contemporary democrat as it was for a sixteenth-century oligarch.

Critics may complain that this work is not especially novel since it offers no real thesis or argument that has not been articulated by previous authors (the vast majority of the citations are of secondary rather than primary sources). Nor is it narrowly penetrating, being mostly concerned to prune away centuries of Machiavellian commentators’ paralyzing fear of violence, rather than adding to the critical thicket. However, I think such criticism misses the point that this book fills a much-needed gap in Machiavellian scholarship on violence and will prove to be an essential reference book for graduates and undergraduates alike (I have already enthusiastically assigned it to both). Winter is in line with modern graduate students who tend to see Machiavelli as a subtle promoter of spectacle as a rhetorical strategy rather than as an advocate of power plays involving brute force or fraud (106). As such, his book can be summarized in one sentence: “At issue in the constitution of a political order is not only who controls the means of violence, but also how violence circulates symbolically” (140). Contemporary students might have less of an issue than the critical “old guard” with Winter’s insistence that “like Nozick, Machiavelli conceives of violence as a communicative act” (195). If the reader shares these touchstones, then this book will prove as essential an addition to their library as it is to mine.

Ours by Every Law of Right and Justice: Women and the Vote in the Prairie Provinces

Sarah Carter, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020, pp. 288.

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Sarah Carter’s much-welcomed *Ours by Every Law of Right and Justice* is only the second published work—and the first in 70 years—to examine female suffrage across all three Canadian Prairie provinces. The book is a synthesis of accounts of suffrage campaigns in the three provinces and highlights “the contributions of . . . activists and the steps they took toward equality and justice while also recognizing the blind spots, shortcomings and exclusions that resulted in equality and justice for only some” (6). Regarding the latter, Carter emphasizes especially the “settler colonial context and the long shadows of racism,” which (along with the Prairie culture of patriarchy) are key themes of the book. Carter asserts that “the Prairie suffrage movement coincided with years of intense colonization” that included the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their land, livelihoods and rights. In this context, Carter argues, the efforts of settler suffragists helped to “advance the cause of settler domination” (6) and their success was “a step toward consolidating settler power” (99).

While the emphasis on the settler colonial context is a significant contribution to suffrage scholarship, the claim that suffrage was a significant step toward consolidating settler power warrants further empirical consideration. The clearing of the Prairies for white settlement was undoubtedly colonialism at its most brutal. For First Nations peoples, it resulted in “their demographic nadir in the aftermath of the influenza epidemic of 1889–90” (Daschuk, 2013: 180). It was in 1891 that female suffrage was first officially endorsed by any organization on the Prairies—the Manitoba Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (45). To be sure,